

Attorney's Docket: 2002DE131
Serial No.: 10/656,398
Group: 1714

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed March 7, 2006, has been carefully considered together with each of the references cited therein. The amendments and remarks presented herein are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action. The amendments made herein are fully supported by the application as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, reconsideration of the present Application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

CLAIM STATUS

Claims 1-19 and 22-44 are pending in this Application. By this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 3-8, 10, 11, 16-18, 29 and 40. New claims 45-52 have been added, while claim 2 has been cancelled. The claims under consideration, therefore, are believed to include claims 1, 3-19 and 22-52.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office indicates that claims 2-8 and 10-13 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have added the subject matter of now cancelled claim 2 into independent claim 1. The dependencies of claims 3-6 have been changed to claim 1, while claims 7 and 8, 10 and 11 have been rewritten in independent form. In addition, independent claims 18, 19 and 40 have been rewritten to include the subject matter of now cancelled claim 2.

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The Office finds claims 16, 17, 19, 25 and 26 in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102/103

Claims 1, 9, 14, 15, 18, 22-24, 27-35, 37-39 and 41-44 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Bienmuller et al. 6,780,905. This rejection is respectfully overcome.

All of the independent claims referenced in this rejection, namely claims 1 and 18, have been amended to recite the subject matter of the now cancelled claim 2, which was objected to by the Office as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In view of this amendment, it is respectfully contended that the 35 USC § 102(e)/35 USC § 103(a) rejection has been overcome.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 36 and 40 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Wesch et al. 4,123,587. This rejection is respectfully overcome. Independent claim 40 has been rewritten in independent form to include limitation of now cancelled claim 2. Claim 36 is a dependent claim, depending ultimately from claim 1, which, for the reasons discussed above, is believed to be in condition for allowance. In view of these amendments, it is respectfully contended that the 35 USC § 102(b) rejection has been overcome.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the fee of \$400.00 or whatever fee may be required for the additional independent claims to Account No. 03-2060. If any additional fees are due in connection with this application, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the fee to deposit account 03-2060.

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In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, the present Application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and reconsideration of it is requested. If the Examiner disagrees, he is requested to contact the attorney for Applicants at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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